

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 15, 2021

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: MARGARET ORLANDO & LAURA DURHAM, DIVISION CHIEFS
RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

SUBJECT: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE ITEM

All Recreation programs and events are modified to meet COVID-19 guidelines and best practices. All participants are screened for symptoms and must wear masks, physical distancing is required, and capacity is significantly reduced.

Program Wrap-Ups

- **Chinquapin** offered an Underwater Egg Hunt for families on April 4. Participants were grouped for 45- minute sessions where they were able to swim for eggs and then exchange them for goodie bags.
- **Charles Houston** offered an exciting Tweens & Teens work-out program call H.I.T.T. that gets the heart pumping with 45- minute classes that include boxing style exercise, jump rope combinations, and mixed aerobics. The class was held February 25-March 25.



- Pickleball continues to grow in popularity and Intro and Intermediate classes held at **Charles Houston** were full again bringing in over \$1400 in revenue from February 19-March 26.
- During the month of March, the **Community Outreach Section** has partnered with the Alexandria Health Department, Alexandria's Social Responsibility Group (SRG), Sheriff, Police, Fire, and other agencies as well as Faith Based organizations, local non-profits, and businesses to spread the word about COVID Vaccines that are available to the

community. RPCA staff, partners and volunteers went door to door handing out literature in some of the City's most vulnerable communities. Members of the community were able to register for the vaccine as well as ask questions about the process and the potential risks of the vaccine. Over 2,000 homes were visited by this special task force and over 200 City residents registered for the vaccine. This outreach gained attention from coverage on Fox 5 and NBC news reports.

- OSTP Virtual Plus participants at **Leonard “Chick” Armstrong** continue to participate in **environmental education** activities led by the **Buddie Ford Nature Center**. The monthly theme was “Animals Symbolism and Signs of Spring” learning about animals that hibernate and the environmental signs that alert them to Spring. Next month's theme will be the Solar System.
- Spring Break Camps were a huge hit with our community this spring! **The Fee Classes and Camps Section** offered full day and half day camp options at the following locations: Chinquapin Recreation Center, Four Mile Run Park, Jefferson Houston field, Schuyler Hamilton Skatepark and the Durant Center. All together 75 campers, ages 4-14, participated in Skateboarding, Tennis, Lacrosse, Soccer, Basketball, Baseball and Art. Over \$18K was generated in revenue.
- **Mt. Vernon Pop Up Art** activities were offered with RPCA contractor “Art Box” and open to neighborhood families at outdoor locations on the recreation center field and at Potomac Yard Park on Saturday mornings March 27 and April 2. A great time was had by all as they did marble painting, shaving cream art, edible paints and more.
- Youth enrolled in the **Mt. Vernon** Virtual Plus Program were able to register for Spring Break Camp that offered lots of crafts and outdoor games including egg hunts and egg relay races. It was a fun break from virtual school and the kids and staff had a great time!
- **Nannie J. Lee's TR Achieving Greatness Program** began their Spring session with “March Madness!” The month of March had a lot of exciting things to do with St. Patrick's Day activities like “Pot of Goals” craft projects and “Reading Rainbow.” The St. Patrick's Day center decorations brought joy and excitement to the center. The Madness followed into Spring Break where participants enjoyed new bright and exciting Spring decorations, craft projects including tie-dye and bunny ears and an egg hunt.



- **Patrick Henry's** March classes went well including **Flip First Tumbling**, **Roller Skating for Fitness/Fun** and **Body Part Aerobics**.



- The **Sports Section** prepared for the upcoming **Tee Ball & Coach Pitch Season** hosting its first virtual coaches meeting. The meeting was well attended by the coaches who had completed the process to become volunteer coaches. Skylar Borman led the meeting, and the coaches were excited to receive team rosters and pick up equipment to get started with practices the week of April 12.
- **Basketball Drills & Skills** had twenty- four participants attend three sessions instructed by Tim Catron, Marcus Jones, and T'neisha Turner. Participants learned the fundamentals of basketball in a safe and positive environment.

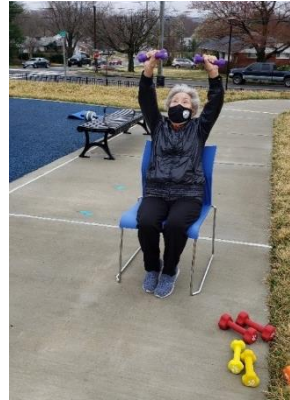


- **William Ramsay COVID Mobile Vaccination Clinic** was offered on April 3 in collaboration with the Alexandria Health Department, Same Day Health, and ALIVE!'s Eviction Prevention Partnership Program, providing 100 appointments for residents from the surrounding properties to get the Johnson and Johnson vaccine at the Ramsay

Recreation Center. All available doses of the vaccine were given out and an additional list of 15 names of neighbors interested in the vaccine were generated by walk-ups. **Another clinic on April 11** provided an additional 500 shots to individuals living in the West End of the City with more clinics planned. Ramsay is working with AHD to outreach to communities that may have barriers to getting the vaccine.

- Spring Break Camp at **Ramsay** had a great outdoors theme. Starting off the week with guided nature walks by the **Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center**, the students then spent the week doing nature scavenger hunts, building, and painting birdhouses, making no-sew sock bunnies, making turtle art, and making slime (not necessarily with the great outdoors theme, but who doesn't love slime!). The students had a great time and enjoyed their time out in the sun!

Program Updates

- **Charles Houston** will begin offering **teen activities** and programs in March for youth starting at age 12. Several programs are lined up through the summer, including cooking activities, mentoring programs from Project Success, teen movie nights, and fitness.
 - The **Gymnastics Monday Clinic** is new at **Chinquapin** with participants able to register by the week or month. This program will continue through the end of the school year. The clinic is designed to teach the basics of gymnastics.
 - **Patrick Henry Pop-up Rec** will continue throughout April on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at the center and in neighborhood parks bringing recreation to the community in outdoor spaces. Activities include games, exercise and fitness, and crafts for all ages.
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- The **Fee Classes and Camps Section** is offering 94 different Spring programs for all ages and interests! Some programs are taking advantage of our beautiful weather by being offered exclusively outdoors while others are in our facilities across the city. Some new programming includes **Ninja Reading Time** (offered by PK Move), **Meditation and Mindful Yoga for adults** (offered by Christie Motely), and **Family Yoga** (taught by Alejandra O'Connor).
 - The **Community Outreach Section** manages Safe Place which is a nationally recognized and licensed program designed to provide resources, support, and guidance to youth in crisis. Safe Place Week is held every March to bring awareness to the program, this year it was March 21-27. There are 32 Safe Place locations across the City at recreation centers, fire stations, libraries, and at other community organizations.

Upcoming Events

- **Charles Houston** is excited to start offering programs for youth titled “**Arts & Eats**” starting at age 12. The center has several programs lined up from now through the summer to include cooking activities, mentoring programs from Project Success, teen movie night and fitness programs geared towards our youth. Attendance has been growing since the program began on March 17.
- **Chick Armstrong** will offer a “**Do It Yourself (DIY)**” **workshop** in collaboration with **Home Depot**. This one-day outdoor workshop for school age children ages 5-12 is designed to give the youth an opportunity to create and build small DIY projects. Led by Home Depot staff, they may become future builders using their DIY imagination.
- **Fee Classes and Camps Section** is collaborating with the Jefferson Houston art teachers to provide space for a spring art display of their students’ work. Some of the work has been done while learning remotely, while others will be pieces that the students have completed now that they are back in person! Come walk through and take a look at the wonderful art pieces that will be hung on the fencing outside the basketball court and playgrounds by Durant Center from April 30 through May!
- **Patrick Henry** will offer many class programs for all ages including **Hip Hop Fitness & Circuit Training** for teens and adults that aid in firming and sculpting the body through hip-hop dance and interval circuit training. **Senior Stretching** for individuals 55+ is a low impact class that improves range of motion and decreases the potential for injury.
- Starting to transition back into offering in-person playgroups, the Center for Alexandria's Children will offer their play group virtually and in-person on the **William Ramsay** Recreation Center's Patio beginning in April. Using tables and mats outdoors, families will be able to safely gather while adhering to COVID safety protocols.
- **Lil Pro Sports, Basketball Ball Handling, and Rookie Weekend Baseball Clinic** were all popular programs in the fall and winter and will make a return this Spring.
- The **Youth Sports Advisory Board** will meet on April 12 at 7 p.m. This meeting will be held virtually.

Special Features

- To assist with the outdoor fitness classes planned for Spring, Durant Center will manage a newly purchased bluetooth speaker system that is to be used only during classes. This system should assist in providing a fun and engaging class atmosphere for these programs! An amplified sound permit has been approved.
- A project to replace the lights at the **Ramsay** Futsal/Tennis courts will break ground this week. Once complete, the community will be able to have evening access to a much-loved part of the community. In the afternoon and evening hours the futsal/tennis courts are always filled with teens and adults making use of the space.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 15, 2021

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: OSCAR MENDOZA, DIVISION CHIEF - PARK OPERATIONS, RPCA

SUBJECT: PARK OPERATIONS MONTHLY UPDATE

1. PARK AND FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

a. Park Maintenance

- Park Operations staff completed removal of snow equipment from vehicles and all preventive maintenance for summer storage.
- Six Park Operation staff participated in the Playground Surfacing Technician training. Staff received certificates of achievement and are now qualified to operate the Triax A and E Missile Surface Impact Testers. Park Operations will begin inhouse testing of the city's playground and athletic fields this May. The service was previously provided by an outside vendor at an annual cost of \$39,000.

b. Park Facilities Maintenance

- Park Facilities staff are working on low frequency playground inspections and repairs.
- Facilities began spring turn-on of drinking fountains, irrigation and public restrooms.

2. URBAN FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE

a. Urban Forestry

- Continued the hiring process for a new East District Arborist.
- Reviewed bids for a new tree planting contractor.
- Identified new tree planting locations.

b. Horticulture

- Nothing to report this month.

3. NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT



133 South Quaker Lane.



Triax E-Missile Athletic Fields

a. Invasive Plant Management and Ecological Restoration

- Staff supervised our contractor, Invasive Plant Control (IPC), in the removal of English Ivy, Callery Pear, Porcelain-berry, Oriental Bittersweet, Bush Honeysuckle, Lesser Celandine, and others at Landover Park, Timberbranch Parkway, Angel Park, Potomac Greens Park, and Ben Brenman Park.
- Staff participated in IPC's non-chemical test-plot treatments for invasive plant management using the Foam stream technology (hot water with a biodegradable foam to hold heat). <https://www.weedingtech.com/us/applications/>.

b. Cooperative Initiatives

- Staff and volunteer installed 11 tons of Coastal Plain bank run gravel (RPCA's park standard for natural area trails where a non-mulch is required) to the N. Van Dorn Street trail entrance to Fort Ward Park as part of the soft surface trail improvement project. The gravel was installed by hand to protect tree roots and prevent soil compaction and disturbance.
- After a long hiatus due to covid-19, Betsy Collins resumed the Virginia herbaria digitization project with the imaging of 139 [City of Alexandria Herbarium](#) (AVCH) specimens at the George Mason University Herbarium (GMUF). Nearly 3,000 AVCH specimens have been imaged to date.
- Staff and volunteer planted 25 site-appropriate native shrubs, 53 wildflowers, and 28 Christmas Ferns at the south entrance walkway to Monticello Park.
- Staff is monitoring for amphibians in wetland habitats in the City of Alexandria in what will become an annual frog-call survey. The purpose of the survey is to assess the species and abundance of frogs and toads that occur in the City's wetland habitats. Amphibians are important "indicator species" and their presence generally indicates a healthy wetland. In outlying years, volunteers will be recruited and trained to participate in the frog call surveys, and Alexandria will contribute data collected to a nationwide citizen science project called Frog Watch that is headed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

c. Environmental Review

- Nothing to report this month.

4. JEROME "BUDDIE" FORD NATURE CENTER



IPC demonstrates the non-herbicide steam-foam equipment at Ben Brenman Park.



N. Van Dorn Street trail entrance to Fort Ward Park.



Eleven-ton pile of bank run gravel to be moved uphill and spread.



Finished result.

a. Programs/Updates

The Nature Center had 179 visitors in March and provided 13 impromptu programs for 32 of them. Throughout the month we conducted a total of 21 programs for 298 participants and saw a total of 477 people.

School Programs:

- This month we began conducting virtual, Standards of Learning (SOL) based programs for Alexandria City Public Schools. Patrick Henry Elementary hosted us for a Habitats programs for their 5 kindergarten classes. Douglas MacArthur Elementary hosted us for an Adaptations programs for their 3rd grade classes. In all we conducted a total of 7 virtual programs through Zoom and saw a total of 202 students.

Outreach Programs:

- Nature Center educators conducted a total of 11 in-person programs for 4 recreation centers (Chick Armstrong, William Ramsay, Mt Vernon, and Patrick Henry) seeing a total of 76 students and recreation staff. This month's theme was Signs of Spring. We looked at some native flowers, talked about which birds would be coming back, and listened to some frog calls. Afterwards the kids made their own felt frogs to take home.
- The Nature Center also participated in Spring Break camp at William Ramsay Rec. We worked with recreation leaders to prepare a nature guide for the students to use throughout the week and led 3 hikes through DKNP for 20 students and staff.

b. Volunteers and Interns

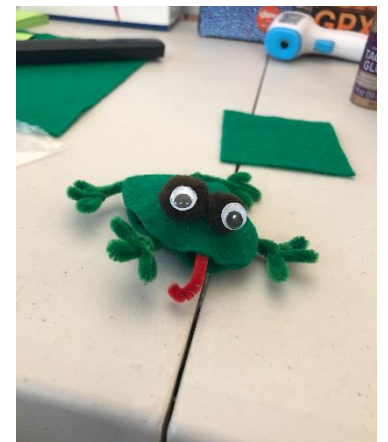
- One Nature Center volunteer worked 15 hours this month assisting with weekly animal health checks and soaks.

c. Noteworthy

- Nothing to report this month.



Tarryn conducting a Habitats program for Lyles Crouch Elementary School.



Felt frog craft for recreation center programs.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 15, 2021

TO: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: JACK BROWAND, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR *JB*
RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

BETHANY ZNIDERSIC, DIVISION CHIEF *BZ*
PARK PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & WATERFRONT

ITEM 4: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DIVISION UPDATE
PARK PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & WATERFRONT

Capital Improvement Project Update

Project Managers: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Capital Development and Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director

- **Awarded** - Armistead L. Boothe Park Synthetic Field Conversion Project Design Contract
- **Awarded** - James T. Luckett Restroom Construction Contract
- **Awarded** - Nicolas Colasanto Interactive Fountain Design Contract
- **Awarded** - Multi-Court Athletic Light Replacement (William Ramsay & Armistead Boothe)
- **In Progress** - Landover Park ADA Access Ramp design
- **In Progress** - Fence Installation, Repair and Removal ITB
- **In Progress** - Swimming Pools Maintenance and Repairs ITB
- **In Progress** - Fort Ward Park Picnic Shelter ADA Access Construction ITB
- **In Progress** - Landscape Architect of Record Request for Qualifications (RFQU)
- **In Progress** - Tree Planting Invitation to Bid (rebid)
- **In Progress** - Architectural Engineering for Eugene Simpson Stadium Park – Ball Fields Renovation (RFQU)
- **In Progress** - Holmes Run Trail Flood Damage Repair Design (RFQU)
- **Submitted** - Fort Ward Park Playground Renovation Construction ITB
- **Submitted** - Chinquapin Park Playground Renovation (RFQU)

Armistead L. Boothe Park Synthetic Field Conversion Project

Project Managers: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Park Planning and Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director

The Field Replacement project will convert the existing natural turf field to a full synthetic turf diamond field with synthetic turf overlay rectangular field. In addition, the project will include upgrades to the field lighting, dugouts, warm up areas, batting cages, spectator seating, scoreboard, and scorers' table. The site has several environmental constraints, including the floodplain and two Resource Protection Areas (RPA). While the project is unable to remove all encroachments from the 100-foot buffer of the southern RPA, the proposed plan does create a 50-foot buffer from the footprint of the existing field and will remove all existing impervious surfaces out of the 100-foot buffer on the western RPA. A special exception granted by the Planning Commission will be necessary to permit the field within the RPA. Public comment was accepted through April 14 and additional information is posted on the City's website, including the March 18, 2021 presentation to the Park and Recreation Commission available [here](#).

Ben Brenman Solar Trail Light Installation

Project Managers: Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner II

This project will install 11 solar lights along the park trail at the southernmost edge of Ben Brenman Park. The new lights will improve the experience and safety of pedestrians using the trail. The installation is anticipated for summer of 2021. These lights would be the second install of solar lighting within the RPCA park system.

Ewald Park Temporary Traffic Garden

Project Managers: Christine Mayeur, Complete Streets Program Manager, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

The Department of Environmental Services will work with community volunteers to install a temporary 'Pop-Up' Traffic Garden in Ewald Park on the footprint of the recently demolished pool and pool house. The work is anticipated to be complete in 2-3 days and will be scheduled in April. The temporary traffic garden will provide additional recreation opportunities in Ewald Park. A redesign process for the park is anticipated to kick-off in FY2022.

Four Mile Run Park Playground Furniture Improvements

Project Manager: Judy Lo, Acting Principal Planner, Park Planning

The furniture improvements will add accessible picnic tables and bicycle racks located in the vicinity of the futsal court and playground. The furnishings will be mounted to a permeable pavement. The permeable pavement will help to alleviate some of the drainage issues occurring near the court. The installation will be completed in April weather permitting.

Open Space Steering Committee Update

Project Managers: Judy Lo, Acting Principal Planner, Park Planning and Ana Vicinanza, Urban Planner II, Park Planning

The Open Space Steering Committee continues to work with staff on Task 1 of the Policy Plan. At the March 30 meeting, staff presented information on the proposed FY22 open space budget and reviewed recommendations for public access easements. The Committee also discussed changes to the current park typologies list. Staff provided information on the future Public Open Space zoning text amendment process. For more information about the Open Space Policy Plan and the planning process, visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/89491>.

Wayfinding Sign Replacement Program Update

Project Managers: Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Park Planning and Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner II, Capital Development

The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services has completed Phase 5 of the Citywide Wayfinding Program Implementation Project. This project included the upgrade of 37 park entrance signs across the City to the new green Wayfinding standards. Removal of the old red park entrance signs at these locations is anticipated to be complete this month. Additional park entrance sign replacements will be scheduled over the next two years through the RPCA Capital Improvement Program to address the remaining parks.

William Ramsay Multi-Purpose Court Lighting Replacement Update

Project Managers: Daniel Unkle, Urban Planner II, Capital Development

This project will replace the existing tennis/futsal court lights at the William Ramsay Recreation Center with a modern LED pole lighting system. The new lighting will bring an energy savings, compared to the existing metal halide lighting system. The project will be completed by early May 2021.

April 15, 2021 Discussion Items

- **Open Space Policy Plan Update – Task 1**
 - Judy Lo, Acting Principal Planner, Park Planning
 - Ana Vicinanzo, Urban Planner II, Park Planning
- **Armistead L. Boothe Park Field Conversion – Environmental Exception**
 - Bethany Znidersic, Acting Division Chief, Park Planning
 - Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director, RPCA
 - Melanie Mason, Principal Planner, Stormwater Management, T&ES